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CONFIDENTIAL PTQ6711

PAGE 01 HARARE 06644 01 OF 03 281616Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/007W		
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7713
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 006644

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/10

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SIGNALS POSSIBLE SHIFT IN
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HARARE 06644 01 OF 03 281616Z
ZIMBABWE LAND REFORM POLICY

REFS: A) HARARE 6330, B) HARARE 6297, C) HARARE 6282

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASONS: 1.5
(B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN A NOVEMBER 15 MEETING WITH ASSISTANT
SECRETARY SUSAN E. RICE, FOREIGN MINISTER STAN MUDENGE

SIPDIS

SIGNALLED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ) IS READY
TO RETURN TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE 1998 DONORS
CONFERENCE AGREEMENT ON LAND REFORM. THE MINISTER
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MISTAKES HAD BEEN MADE IN THE FARM
DESIGNATION AND ACQUISITION PROCESS, AND THAT THERE IS
AN "ADJUSTMENT EXERCISE" UNDERWAY TO DELIST THE MOST
PRODUCTIVE COMMERCIAL FARMS. MUDENGE ALSO SAID THAT THE
GOZ IS NEGOTIATING WITH THE MANAGERS OF THE SAVE
CONSERVANCY TO FIND AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION TO THE
OCCUPATION OF THAT IMPORTANT TOURIST DESTINATION BY WAR
VETERANS. MUDENGE SAID THAT THE GOZ VIEWS THE UNDP PLAN
AS THE WAY FORWARD ON LAND REFORM. THE GOZ'S DECISION
TO ABIDE BY THE SUPREME COURT ORDER DECLARING THE FARM
OCCUPATIONS ILLEGAL (REF A) IS INTENDED AS A SIGNAL THAT
THE GOZ IS SERIOUS ABOUT RESOLVING THE LAND ISSUE
AMICABLY. IF THE DONORS ARE WILLING TO COME BACK AND
FUND LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE, THE GOZ WILL EFFECTIVELY
AND IMMEDIATELY, IF NOT EXPLICITLY, BACK AWAY FROM ITS
FAST-TRACK RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM ACCORDING TO MUDENGE.
FURTHERMORE, MUDENGE BELIEVES PRESIDENT MUGABE MAY WELL
BE PREPARED TO LEAVE OFFICE ONCE THE LAND ISSUE IS
WORKED OUT, AND AFTER A REASONABLE FACE-SAVING
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HARARE 06644 01 OF 03 281616Z
INTERLUDE. HE CAUTIONED HOWEVER, THAT MUGABE WILL PUSH
THE COUNTRY OVER THE PRECIPICE IF MASS ACTION BY THE
OPPOSITION BACKS HIM INTO A CORNER. THE SECURITY FORCES
HAVE BEEN GIVEN ORDERS TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE, SHORT
OF USING LETHAL FORCE, TO STOP MASS ACTION, ACCORDING TO
THE FOREIGN MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) ON NOVEMBER 15, ASSISTANT SECRETARY SUSAN E.
RICE, ACCOMPANIED BY OFFICE OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR ARLENE RENDER, SPECIAL ASSISTANT DON GATTO,
AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD, DCM, AND POLOFF (NOTETAKER),
MET MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS STAN MUDENGE.
ACCOMPANYING THE FOREIGN MINISTER WERE POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR DR. NGONI CHIDEYA, AFRICA AND
MIDDLE EAST DIRECTOR GODFREY MWEDZI, UNDERSECRETARY FOR
EUROPE AND AMERICAS JONATHAN WUTAUNASHE, AND U.S. DESK
OFFICER RICHARD CHIBUWE. THE MEETING OPENED WITH A
DISCUSSION ON DRC MATTERS, WHICH WILL BE REPORTED
SEPTEL.

GOVERNMENT WILL PLAY BY ITS OWN RULES

13. (C) THE FOREIGN MINISTER THEN OFFERED TO DISCUSS THE LAND ISSUE. HE OPENED BY SAYING THAT ERRORS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE GOZ'S DESIGNATION AND ACQUISITION OF FARM PROPERTIES FOR RESETTLEMENT. IN FACT, AN "ADJUSTMENT EXERCISE" IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO REMOVE A NUMBER OF AGRI-BUSINESS FARMS FROM THE ACQUISITION LIST. APPROXIMATELY 200 OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST PRODUCTIVE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HARARE 06644 01 OF 03 281616Z
TOBACCO FARMS, WHICH PRODUCE A GOOD DEAL OF ZIMBABWE'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE, WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE LIST, MUDENGE STATED. THE GOZ WOULD AUTOMATICALLY DELIST OTHER FARMS THAT DO NOT MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESETTLEMENT PURPOSES. THE GOZ WOULD ALSO NOT LIST NEW PROPERTIES FOR ACQUISITION TO REMOVE THE "CLOUD OF DOUBT" HANGING OVER THE REMAINING FARMS SO THAT THEY CAN PLANT AND HARVEST THEIR CROPS WITH CONFIDENCE.

14. (C) NONETHELESS, THE GOZ EXPECTED SOME OWNERS OF LISTED FARMS TO RESIST COMPULSORY ACQUISITION, THE MINISTER CONTINUED. THE GOZ WOULD STRICTLY FOLLOW THE REGULATIONS THAT REQUIRE THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE 90 DAYS NOTICE OF ACQUISITION AND THAT ALLOW UP TO A 60-DAY APPEAL PROCESS IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE COURT. FARMERS COULD SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGE THE ACQUISITION OF THEIR FARM IF THEY COULD SHOW THAT THE FARM WOULD NOT BE USED FOR RESETTLEMENT PURPOSES. MUDENGE CLAIMED THAT SOME FARMERS HAD ALREADY SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THEIR PROPERTIES DELISTED BY WAY OF THE APPEAL PROCESS.

15. (C) THE AMBASSADOR RAISED THE CONCERNS THAT AMERICAN INVESTORS IN THE AREA OF THE SAVE CONSERVANCY HAVE OVER THE OCCUPATION OF THE GAME PARK BY WAR VETERANS. THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ6668

PAGE 01 HARARE 06644 02 OF 03 281602Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01
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	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 006644

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HARARE 06644 02 OF 03 281602Z
ZIMBABWE LAND REFORM POLICY

SQUATTERS HAVE DONE CONSIDERABLE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE TO THE PARK BY CUTTING DOWN TREES AND KILLING WILDLIFE, AND HAVE SCARED AWAY MANY POTENTIAL TOURISTS. MUDENGE STATED THAT THE CONSERVANCY IS NEAR THE DISTRICT HE REPRESENTS IN PARLIAMENT (MASVINGO NORTH), AND THAT HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PARK MANAGERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE AREA. HE STATED THAT THE MEDIA HAD EXAGGERATED THE PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE SQUATTERS, BUT THAT HE WAS TRYING TO WORK OUT A DEAL TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE WHITE MANAGERS HAD PROPOSED AN ARRANGEMENT WHERE SOME OF THE PROCEEDS GENERATED FROM THE PARK WOULD GO TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. THE MINISTER COUNTERED THAT THAT WOULD STILL LEAVE THE CONSERVANCY A "WHITE ISLAND," A STATE OF AFFAIRS THAT WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE. NONETHELESS, HE FELT THE TWO SIDES WERE CLOSER TO REACHING AN AMICABLE AGREEMENT.

UNDP INITIATIVE IS THE WAY FORWARD

16. (C) THE GROUP THEN BROKE UP SO THAT ASSISTANT
SECRETARY RICE AND THE MINISTER COULD HAVE A PRIVATE

SIPDIS

MEETING. IN THAT ONE-ON-ONE, MUDENGE TOLD THE SECRETARY
THAT THE GOZ SEES THE UNDP LAND REFORM INITIATIVE AS THE
WAY FORWARD. HE SAID THAT THE UNDP PLAN (REF C) IS IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES AGREED UPON AT THE 1998
DONORS CONFERENCE ON LAND. IT IS ALSO IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE RULE OF LAW, TRANSPARENCY, AND ECONOMIC
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HARARE 06644 02 OF 03 281602Z
VIABILITY. IF THE DONORS AGREED TO COME BACK TO
ZIMBABWE TO FUND LAND REFORM, THE GOZ WOULD EFFECTIVELY,
ALTHOUGH NOT EXPLICITLY, DROP ITS FAST-TRACK LAND
RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM "LIKE A HOT POTATO." THE GOZ ONLY
ADOPTED IT BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN BACKED INTO A CORNER AND
SAW NO OTHER WAY OUT.

RULE OF LAW WILL RETURN

17. (C) THE MINISTER CHARACTERIZED THE GOZ'S DECISION TO
ABIDE BY THE SUPREME COURT'S CONSENT ORDER DECLARING THE
FARM OCCUPATIONS ILLEGAL (REF A) AS VERY SIGNIFICANT AND
WOULD LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE UNDP LAND REFORM
INITIATIVE. HE SAID THE DECISION WAS HOTLY DEBATED IN
CABINET, BUT ULTIMATELY IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE GOZ
COULD NOT AFFORD TO DISOBEY ITS OWN LAWS OR BE PERCEIVED
AS DOING SO. (COMMENT: OF COURSE, THIS WOULD NOT HAVE
BEEN THE FIRST TIME. END COMMENT.) HE STATED THAT BY
AGREEING TO THE RULING, THE GOZ AGREED TO ABIDE BY THE
RULES AND REGULATIONS ALREADY SPELLED OUT IN THE LAND
LEGISLATION..

MUGABE WILL GO, BUT DON'T PUSH

18. (C) WHEN ASKED IF MUGABE WILL RETIRE, MUDENGE
REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT MAY WELL BE PREPARED TO GO IF
THE LAND ISSUE IS WORKED OUT FIRST. HE SAID THAT MANY
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HARARE 06644 02 OF 03 281602Z
IN ZANU-PF WON'T LET HIM GO UNTIL THE LAND ISSUE IS
RESOLVED ONCE AND FOR ALL. HOWEVER, THERE ARE OTHERS IN
THE RULING PARTY WHO ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH THE PARTY'S
SURVIVAL. THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT MUGABE'S
CURRENT THINKING IS THAT HE WILL RUN AGAIN FOR THE
PRESIDENCY IN 2002, AND THEN ONCE RE-ELECTED, STEP DOWN
AFTER A YEAR OR TWO.

19. (C) MUDENGE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE
OPPOSITION ENGAGES IN MASS ACTION, IT WILL PUSH MUGABE
INTO A CORNER. IF MUGABE IS PUSHED TOO HARD, HE WILL
TAKE THE COUNTRY OVER THE CLIFF, MUDENGE WARNED. HE
SAID THAT A STATE OF EMERGENCY, SUSPENSION OF
PARLIAMENT, OR MARTIAL LAW ARE ALL POSSIBILITIES IF MASS
ACTION COMES TO PASS. THE MINISTER STATED THAT HE
BELIEVES THE BRITISH ARE ENCOURAGING MASS ACTION IN
ZIMBABWE AND THAT THE EU HAS LOST ALL INFLUENCE IN
ZIMBABWE BECAUSE IT HAS ALIGNED ITSELF WITH THE BRITISH.
THE GOZ IS TRYING NOT TO PROVOKE THE OPPOSITION BECAUSE
THE MDC IS TRYING TO BAIT THE GOVERNMENT INTO USING
VIOLENCE. THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN GIVEN ORDERS TO
USE ALL MEANS NECESSARY, BUT EXPLICITLY NOT/NOT LETHAL
FORCE, TO STOP THE PLANNED MASS ACTION (REF B). THE
MINISTER HINTED THAT THESE ORDERS COULD BE IGNORED--OR

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ6670

PAGE 01 HARARE 06644 03 OF 03 281603Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01
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PAGE 02 HARARE 06644 03 OF 03 281603Z
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CHANGED--IF THE THREAT TO THE GOVERNMENT BECAME DIRE,
HOWEVER.

SOME SIGNS OF RATIONALITY

[110.](#) (C) COMMENT: MUDENGE'S COMMENTS COULD SIGNAL A MAJOR SHIFT IN THE GOZ'S LAND REFORM POLICY, AND POSSIBLY A BROADER WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN TURNING AROUND ITS FREE-FALLING ECONOMY. MUDENGE'S STATEMENTS MEAN MORE SINCE HE IS A ZANU-PF HARDLINER AND HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF THE DONORS' STANCE ON LAND REFORM. RULING PARTY LEADERS MAY HAVE FINALLY COME TO RECOGNIZE THE UNSUSTAINABILITY OF ITS LAND REFORM "PROGRAM" AND THE DISASTROUS EFFECTS IT HAS HAD ON THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND ZANU-PF'S POPULARITY. THE CHANGE IN DIRECTION APPEARS TO GO DEEPER THAN PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS WHEN MINISTERS GAVE ORDERS TO REMOVE FARM OCCUPIERS WHEN MUGABE WAS OUT OF COUNTRY, ONLY TO BE REVERSED WHEN MUGABE RETURNED. MUGABE WAS IN COUNTRY WHEN MUDENGE TALKED WITH THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY, AND THE DECISION TO ABIDE BY THE SUPREME

SIPDIS
COURT RULING MUST HAVE BEEN MADE WELL BEFORE MUGABE LEFT FOR LIBYA NOVEMBER 11.

[111.](#) (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: THE REAL TEST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESOLVE, HOWEVER, REMAINS IN ITS WILLINGNESS TO REIGN IN WAR VETERANS AND OTHERS WHO
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HARARE 06644 03 OF 03 281603Z
CONTINUE TO ATTACK FARMERS AND ITS WILLINGNESS TO EXPEL THOUSANDS OF SQUATTERS FROM OCCUPIED FARMS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE BUILT PERMANENT HOUSES. RECENT ATTACKS ON WAR VETERANS IN THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA COULD PRESAGE THE END OF THEIR HEYDAY ON THE COMMERCIAL FARMS. THE EMBASSY THINKS MUGABE MAY FINALLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF COMMERCIAL FARMING, ALONG WITH LAW AND ORDER AND INVESTOR CONFIDENCE, WILL ULTIMATELY RESULT IN HIS, AND HIS PARTY'S, UNDOING.

[112.](#) (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: FINALLY, CONTRARY TO THE MINISTER'S ASSERTIONS, RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCES TELL US THAT THE SAVE CONSERVANCY PROBLEM IS NOT CLOSE TO BEING SOLVED AND THAT THE MINISTER IS POLITICALLY ALLIED WITH THOSE OFFICIALS WHO ARE PREVENTING RESOLUTION. END COMMENT.

[113.](#) (U) A/S RICE CLEARED THIS MESSAGE.

MCDONALD

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